Dr. *Chauncy's*

SERMON

Occasioned by the late

EARTHQUAKES.

57

BRITISH MUSEUM

The EARTH *delivered from the* CURSE *to which it is, at preſent, ſubjected.*

A

SERMON

Occaſioned by the late EARTHQUAKES in *Spain* and *Portugal*, as well as *New-England*;

AND

Preached at the BOSTON-*Thurſday-Lecture*, January 22, 1756.

Publiſhed by the general Deſire of the Hearers.

By *Charles Chauncy*, D. D.
One of the Paſtors of the firſt Church in BOSTON.

The Day of the Lord will come,—— in the which the HEAVENS *ſhall paſs away with a great Noiſe;— the* EARTH *alſo, and the Works that are therein, ſhall be burnt up.—Nevertheleſs, we (according to his Promiſe) look for* NEW HEAVENS, *and a* NEW EARTH, *wherein dwelleth Righteouſneſs.*

Apoſtle PETER.

And I ſaw a new Heaven, *and a* new Earth; *for the* firſt Heaven, *and the* firſt Earth, *were paſſed away.* Apoſtle JOHN.

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SERMON

BRITISH MUSEUM

The *World* in which there is NO CURSE.

Rev. xxii. 3.

And there ſhall be no more CURSE.---

MY text falls in that part of the *revelation of God* to his ſervant *John*, by *Jeſus Chriſt*, which relates to the *reſurrection-world*; and among the *characteriſticks* here given of *this world*, that is an obſervable one, *no more* CURSE *ſhall be there.*

The words evidently allude to *that Curſe*, which the righteous God, in the days of *Adam*, and for *his ſin* in eating of the forbidden tree, faſtened on *the earth*; changing it from its *paradiſaick* ſtate, to one that was adapted to be an occaſion of *toil*, and *ſorrow*, and *death*, not only to *him*, but to his *poſterity*, throughout all generations.

I cannot therefore give you a more juſt or lively idea of the *reſurrection-world*, as deſcribed in my text, than by dilating upon the *ſtate* of our *preſent earth*, by reaſon of the primitive *curſe*; for one of the *diſtinguiſhing marks* here given of *that world* is, that it has *no ſuch* CURSE *cleaving to it.*

Tis

Tis both ſeen, and felt, by unhappy experience, that the *earth*, in its preſent ſtate, is ſuch, as that it is impoſſible for any ſon or daughter of *Adam* to poſſeſs life on it, but in *ſuffering* circumſtances, in a leſs or greater degree. As the ſcripture ſpeaks, *Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble*: He is *born to trouble as the ſparks fly upwards*. And ſuch indeed are the inconveniencies and tryals, ſuch the labors and ſorrows, we are all ſubjected to, by the very conſtitution of the *earth* we live upon, ſo various in their Kind, and ſo unavoidable in their nature, that the preſent ſtate of exiſtence may properly be conſidered as a ſcene of *vanity*, *ſuffering*, and *death*; and the longer we any of us continue in it, the more thoroughly we are convinced, that this is the real truth of the caſe. Some, perhaps, ſuffer more evil than they enjoy good; and if any enjoy more good than they ſuffer evil, tis but in a ſmall degree. The ſame earth that is fitted to give us pleaſure, is fitted alſo to give us pain; and every convenience is ſo attended with ſome oppoſite inconvenience, that tis hard to ſay, in many caſes, on which ſide the ballance moſt commonly turns. At the beſt, our condition here is ſo chequered with interchangeable evil and good, that we may all take to our ſelves words, and with accurate truth ſay, *vanity of vanities, all is vanity, and vexation of ſpirit*.

And was this the ſtate, in which God created the *firſt* of our race? The ſcripture ſays no ſuch thing; but quite the reverſe: Informing us, that, upon man's *becoming a living ſoul*, that is, a being capable of communication with material nature, in a way of perception and enjoyment, he found it every way adapted to his convenience and delight, as well as ſupport in life. The earth was endow'd with prolifick virtue, and cauſed to bring forth every kind of fruit, pleaſant to his ſight, and good for food. And as to *death*, he was guarded from

from its touch by *the tree of life, planted in the midſt of the paradiſe of God:* Nor was there, in this happy place, any of thoſe occaſions of *pain*, and *ſorrow*, and *tears*, which we *now* groan under. It was owing to the *diſobedience* of the *one man Adam*, in the ſpecial article wherein he was tried, and the CURSE of God thereby bro't on the *earth*, that *death entered into* the world, with its forerunners, and appendages, in all their frightful and tormenting forms; and has reigned ever ſince, and even over thoſe, who *ſinned not after the ſimilitude of his traſgreſſion.*

Tis plain from *revelation*, however undiſcoverable any other way, that the ſtate of the *earth*, and the circumſtances of mankind, as living on it, are vaſtly different from what they would have been, had not *Adam* fell by tranſgreſſion. The *Curſe* inflicted on the *earth*, by reaſon of his ſin, can be explained in no intelligible ſenſe, upon any other ſuppoſition.

The words of *Moſes* are expreſs in declaring, that it was *for man's ſake*, that is, for his ſin; and that he might be ſubjected to a ſtate of *labor*, and *ſorrow*, and *death*, that the *earth* was *curſed.* But, in what conceivable ſenſe, could God's *curſing the earth* be a means of ſubjecting man to theſe diſadvantages, if the *earth* was not thereby *changed* into a *worſe ſtate* than it was in before his fall, that is, a ſtate leſs fitted to give him *pleaſure*, and more adapted to be an occaſion of *grief*, and to bring on *death?* It ſhould ſeem certain, if the *earth*, in its *original* ſtate, was ſimilar to what it is in its *preſent* condition, there would have been no need of a *curſe* from God in order to its bringing forth *thorns and thiſtles*, and being an occaſion of *toil* and *ſorrow.* And as God *curſed the earth* upon this expreſs deſign, that it might be adapted to *theſe ends*, tis from hence demonſtrable, that its condition, *before the lapſe* (ſo far as we regard revelation) was not the *ſame*

it

it has been *ſince*. If it was, what is the meaning of the *curſe*? What ſignification, carrying in it any important ſenſe, can be put upon it?

The plain truth is, We, the *poſterity* of *Adam*, come into exiſtence ſince his lapſe, and live on this earth in conſequence of it, not as it was in its *priſtine* ſtate, but as it lies under the *actual curſe* of God, that is, adapted to render life, as long as it laſts, a ſcene of *labor, vanity*, and *ſorrow*.

The Apoſtle *Paul* certainly viewed the matter in this light. For he ſays, *Rom.* 8. 20, *The creature is made ſubject to vanity*. And again, v. 22, *The whole creation groaneth, and travaileth together in pain until now*. And when it is ſaid, in my text, by the Apoſtle *John*, in his deſcription of the *reſurrection-world*, that *there is no more curſe there*, the propriety of this *characteriſtick* is evidently founded on thoſe numerous occaſions of *ſorrow*, mankind, at preſent, are ſubjected to, by reaſon of *the curſe that is on the earth*. But if the ſtate of the *earth now* is, and all along has been, the *ſame* it was *before* the fall, how can it be ſaid to be under a *curſe*? It muſt be a ſtrange ſort of *curſe*, that would leave the earth juſt as it found it. It can have no meaning, if it did not ſo *change the earth* as to make it leſs advantagious to man, leſs fitted to be a place of happineſs. Beſides, if the *curſe* did not greatly change the earth for the *worſe*, how ſhall we account for thoſe ſcripture paſſages, which ſpeak of the ſtate of good men, in the *other* world, under the emblem of a *paradiſaick* one? Our Saviour declared to the penitent thief on the croſs, *This day thou ſhalt be with me in paradiſe*. The Apoſtle *Paul* ſays of himſelf, *I was caught up to paradiſe*. And, in the book of the *revelation*, the promiſe to him that overcometh is, that *he ſhall eat of the tree of life in the midſt of the paradiſe of God*. The happy ſtate deſcribed, in

theſe

theſe texts, under the reſemblance of *paradiſe*, is, beyond all controverſy, greater than can be enjoyed on this earth, as it is conſtituted *at preſent*; and conſequently the *ancient paradiſe*, from whence the alluſion is borrowed, muſt have been *vaſtly different* from our *earth*, in its *preſent condition*. The *ancient paradiſe*, it is true, was a particular ſpot of the earth, ſelected by God for the habitation of man in *innocency*: But there is no reaſon to think, there was any conſiderable difference between *that ſpot* of earth, and the earth *in common*. To be ſure, if the *reſt* of the earth, in *that day*, was *ſimilar* to the earth in *this*, there would have been no need of a *Curſe* from God in order to its being an occaſion of *toil* and *ſorrow*. A meer expulſion from *paradiſe* would, in this caſe, have anſwered all the ends of the *curſe*, rendering it quite *needleſs*. So that it ſhould ſeem a point beyond all controverſy, among thoſe who profeſs faith in the revelations of ſcripture, that *this earth*, by means of the *curſe for Adam's ſin*, has been changed from its *firſt* ſtate; and ſo changed as to be the unavoidable occaſion of *vanity*, *labor*, *ſorrow*, and *death*, in a multiplied variety of forms, to all who have lived on it ſince the lapſe.

If any ſhould here aſk, What the change is, in *particular*, that the *curſe* has bro't upon the *earth*, leſs fitting it for *happineſs*, and more adapting it to be an occaſion of *ſorrow* and *ſuffering*?

I anſwer;—It ſeems to me very evident, it is *this* that has changed the *ſeaſons*; making them, inſtead of equable, and gently diſtinguiſhed from each other, ſubject to thoſe extreams of heat and cold, and ſudden turns from one to t'other, we now experience, to our being expos'd to manifeſt inconveniencies, and, many times, great hardſhips and ſufferings.—It is *this* that has changed the fitneſs of the *ground* for the purpoſe of *vegetation*; cauſing it to bring forth its fruit, in all

its various kinds, with leſs perfection, and conſequently with leſs virtue to nutrifie; which muſt, conformably to the eſtabliſh'd connections of nature, affect our bodies, rendering them leſs perfect, and therefore leſs ſuted to be the inſtruments of our ſouls in the exertment of their ſeveral active powers: Beſides which, it now invigorates thoſe *thorns*, and *thiſtles*, and *weeds*, which are the occaſion of infinite *toil* to the ſons of men.—It is *this* that has changed the *air* from its former purity, ſubtilty, and perfect adaptation to the purpoſe of breathing, and its other uſes in the animal and vegetable kingdom; ſubjecting it to thoſe ſteams, exhalations, and heterogeneous mixtures, which are the cauſes, under God, of thoſe ſtorms and tempeſts, of thoſe thunderings and lightnings, of thoſe droughts and rains, and, in a word, of thoſe various *peſtilential* affluvia, which has done ſo much hurt in all ages.—It is *this* that has filled the *bowels* of the earth with thoſe *materials*, whatever they are, that are the *ſecondary* cauſes of that terrible phænomenon we mean by an *earthquake*: And its bowels, in all its quarters, are ſtored with theſe materials for the production of this awful event, either for warning, or deſtruction, in a leſs or greater extent, as God pleaſes.—In a word, it is *this* that has ſo changed the *whole external conſtitution of nature*, as that, inſtead of tending to render the earth a *paradiſaick* one, it conſpires to make it a place of *vanity* and *ſorrow*, *ſuffering* and *death*.

One that has wrote a very learned and ingenious Theory of the earth, has endeavoured to aſſign the *mechanical cauſes* of this *change* of the earth from its *paradiſaick*, to its *preſent* ſtate. I will not affirm, that they are the true ones, or thoſe God was pleaſed, in fact, to co-operate with in order to effect this change. But thus much I will venture to ſay, that *this change*,

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as owing to *theſe cauſes*, is both intelligible, and credible, upon the ſtricteſt phyloſophical reaſoning; and that we have therefrom a clear and juſt account, how the *curſe*, the ſcripture ſpeaks of, *might* come upon the *earth* in conſequence of the ſin of the firſt parents of men, and *change* it from its former ſtate; making it, in the natural courſe of things, an occaſion of all thoſe *inconveniencies, difficulties, fears, ſorrows, ſufferings*, and *deaths*, we are now ſubjected to, and ſo earneſtly groan to be delivered from.

I may pertinently add here, it is highly probable, that the alwiſe righteous God ſo adjuſted all *ſecond Cauſes*, when, by his *curſe* he changed the external ſtate of nature, as that they ſhould operate, in all ages, and in all places, as might beſt anſwer his deſigns in the *moral* government of the creature. What I mean is, He might ſettle ſuch *laws* with reſpect to natural cauſes, ſo proportion their force, ſphere of action, manner and degree of operation, as that, under his all-powerful and alwiſe concurring influence, they ſhould conſpire together to produce thoſe effects, at ſuch times, and in ſuch places, as were beſt fitted to their moral ſtate, and might ſerve for warning and correction, or total deſolation and ruin, as he ſhould judge expedient. And in conſequence of this ſettlement of the courſe of nature, taking riſe from the ſin of the *one man Adam*, it may come to paſs, that his *poſterity*, in all after-ages, as they forſake God, are involved in thoſe calamities, which either warn and diſcipline them, or totally deſtroy them from off the face of the earth, as the ends of government make the one, or the other, fit and proper.

We ſee, in fact, that the heavens over us, and the earth under us, are charged with *materials* that are fitted, whenever God pleaſes, in a variety of ways, to awaken the attention of a careleſs world, and call them

to the faith, and fear, and ſervice of the great ſovereign of the univerſe; or to put a period to their exiſtence here, if they are incurably turned to infidelity and wickedneſs. It is from theſe materials in nature, that *tempeſts*, *famines*, *peſtilences*, *earthquakes*, and the like, take their riſe. And theſe are the *great inſtruments* of providence. It is by theſe, that God keeps our degenerate world under reſtraint. Were it not for the diſplays he makes, at proper times, and in proper places, of his being, and perfection, and governing providence, in theſe ways of terror, mankind might, at length, forget there was a God, or live as tho' there was none.

The *final cauſe* therefore of God's *curſing the earth*, and fitting it for the production of ſo much evil, in the courſe of providence, might be the *good* of mankind. Such a world as this *now* is, and by the *curſe* of God too, may be the moſt *ſuitable* one for ſuch creatures as we are ſince the lapſe: Had the earth remained in its *paradiſaick* ſtate, giving no room to expect *death*, or thoſe occaſions of ſorrow, and fear, and ſuffering, we are now ſubjected to, it might have been an abode altogether unadapted to the buſineſs of training us up for the enjoyment of God, the ſupreme Good. It was, perhaps, highly expedient, if not abſolutely neceſſary, that we ſhould live in a world of *diſcipline*; a world that would, in the natural courſe of things, be the occaſion of many difficulties, inconveniencies, and tryals, by means of which, we might be formed to a meekneſs for *another* world, in which we ſhould be totally freed from them. An interrupted ſtate of eaſe and pleaſure would, morally ſpeaking, be the ruin of mankind. We need a mixture of *evil* with good, to check our pride; to reſtrain our bodily appetites; to take off our affections from the things of the earth; and to excite in us a juſt ſenſe of our dependence on God.

God. And we need alſo, every now and then, to be alarmed by this or that diſpenſation, that ſhall ſpeak with a voice more loud and awful than is common and ordinary. The inhabitants of the world in general, and the inhabitants in this or the other place in ſpecial, are ſometimes ſunk into a ſtate of ſuch careleſsneſs and ſtupidity, have ſo little faith in God, and are ſo given up to commit all iniquity with greedineſs, that, humanly ſpeaking, there is no room to expect their reformation and amendment, but by ſuch manifeſtations of the power, and greatneſs, and majeſty of God, as will even force a faith in him, and a ſerious attention to his character as the moral governor of the world.

Accordingly, the *courſe of nature*, ſince the *lapſe*, and in conſequence of it, is wiſely and mercifully adapted to both theſe ends: Giving occaſion, at all times, for diſciplinary tryals; and bringing on alſo, at certain intervals, ſuch tremendous events as either alarm the fears of men, and ſolemnly call them to repentance, or deſtroy them from off the earth by hundreds and thouſands, having filled up the meaſure of their iniquities. And this *courſe of nature* will continue, and operate to theſe ends, producing both *ordinary* and *extraordinary* evils, more or leſs extenſive and fatal, as the ſtate of mankind ſhall make them neceſſary, till the world is ripe for that *diſſolution by fire*, of which we are particularly forewarned by the Apoſtle *Peter*, in the 3^d *chapter* of his 2^d *epiſtle*; the proviſions for which were all, doubtleſs, laid in ſtore, when God curſed the earth, and ſo adjuſted, as that they ſhould all unite and operate at the time ſet therefor in the counſels of God: Tho' it ought to be remembered here, the *fire* of this Day of God's wrath, which is reſerved for the perdition of ungodly men, will be ſo far from finally ruining this world, as that it ſhall be a *mean*, under the government of the all-powerful and all-wiſe God, of taking

off the *curſe* from the earth, and reducing it to its *paradiſaick* ſtate, or one that is much better.

Bleſſed be God, we have good reaſon from the *revelations* of his word, to expect *ſuch a ſtate* as this; tho' the preſent *heaven* and *earth* ſhall be diſſolved by the fire of the great day. Our Saviour, ſpeaking of thoſe who had followed him, ſays, that, *in the regeneration, they ſhall ſet upon twelve thrones*, Matt. 19. 28. The word here tranſlated *regeneration*, is the very one (as Dr. *Burnet* obſerves) that is uſed, both by the *greek philoſophers*, and the *greek chriſtian fathers*, for the *renovation of the world*. And, doubtleſs, the *new form of exiſtence* that is to be given to all things, their being, as it were, *born again* to another and better ſtate, is what our ſaviour has here in view. In the *Acts* of the Apoſtles, chapter 3. ver. 21, *The heaven is ſaid to* receive *Chriſt*, UNTIL THE TIMES OF THE RESTITUTION OF ALL THINGS. The Apoſtle *Peter*, in agreement with this tho't, beſpeaks the chriſtians he wrote to in ſuch language as that, 2 *Epiſtle*, 3 chap. ver. 13, *We, according to his promiſe, look for new heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteouſneſs*. The Apoſtle *John* alſo, in his viſion, ſaw this preſent *earth and heavens flee away*, ſo as that *there was no more place found for them*, Rev. 20. 11. And when the earth and heavens, that now are, were paſſed away, he *ſaw a new heavens, and a new earth*, riſe up in their room, *Chap.* 21. 1. And it is in conſequence of theſe viſions, that he introduces *him that ſat on the throne*, ſaying, as in the 5th ver. of this chapter, *Behold, I make all things new*.

Some have tho't, that theſe *new heavens and earth* will be formed before the *general reſurrection* and *judgment*; but 'tis with me beyond all doubt, that they are herein miſtaken. For the diſſolution of the preſent earth and heavens, which the Apoſtle *Peter* ſpeaks of;

and

and the paſſing away of the earth and heavens, which is ſpoken of by the Apoſtle *John*, mean one and the ſame thing. And tis remarkable, the Apoſtle *John ſaw the dead, both ſmall and great, ariſe, and come forth to judgment*, before he ſaw the erection of a *new earth* and *heavens*, in the room of the old which had paſſed away.

It ſhould ſeem therefore very plain, that the *new heavens* and *new earth*, ſo particularly ſpoken of, both by the Apoſtle *Peter*, and the Apoſtle *John*, are *this world of our's* bro't back to its *paradiſaick* ſtate, or one that is better; and that the *very world we now live in*, thus changed and made new, is the place, where good men, after the reſurrection, and judgment, ſhall live and reign with Chriſt forever and ever.

And in truth, where elſe ſhould be the *place* of the abode of good men, in the *reſurrection*-ſtate? As one expreſſes it, "In the boundleſs ſpace that ſurrounds us, "we know of nothing but ſuns, or fixed ſtars, earths, "and moons, and comets. Neither of theſe, except "the earths, can be tho't fit to be the habitation of "good men in the future ſtate. In ſuch a place, in "the *new earth*, the Apoſtles *Peter* and *John* ſay, "good men ſhall dwell. Why then ſhould we ſeek "for another unknown place, of which the ſcripture "never ſpeaks". [a] Eſpecially, when the promiſe of our

[a] Mr. *Joſeph Hallet*, from whom the above paſſage is cited, makes the following Obſervation, which may be worthy of notice. "The "word, *Heaven*, never once in all the bible ſignifies the place "in which good men ſhall dwell *after* the judgment-day. I "venture, ſays he, to be pretty poſitive in aſſerting this, becauſe "I have examin'd every place in the *new-teſtament*, in which "*Heaven* is mentioned, with a view to this. The word, *Hea-*"*ven*, in ſcripture ſignifies the throne of God, the place where "Chriſt *now* is, where angels, and ſpirits of juſt men, *now* "dwell. When the Apoſtles ſpeak of good men, *after* "the day of judgment, they never call it *Heaven*; but the "*holy city*, the *new Jeruſalem*, *eternal life*, *glory*, *honor*, *im-*"*mortality*, a *crown*, a *Kingdom*, and the like." *Notes on peculiar texts*, Vol. I. Pag. 198. He

our Saviour to thoſe who finally overcome is, that *they ſhall reign with him on earth.*

But be the *place* of the abode of good men, after the reſurrection, where it will, whether on *this earth made new*, or any other globe in heaven, that is one of the eſſential *characteriſticks* of it, *No curſe ſhall be there.*

We may then form ſome clear and juſt idea of the *future ſtate* of good men, by comparing it with the *preſent*, and leaving out, in the compariſon, all the inconveniencies and evils, the *curſe* has ſubjected it to.

Our life on earth, in conſequence of the curſe, is a continual labor; the buſineſs of it, in great part, a ſore

He obſerves likewiſe, " That the *new Jeruſalem*, the *holy city*, " [the *preſent heaven* of good men] ſhall come down upon the " *new earth*. Rev. xxi. 2, 10. *I John ſaw the holy city, new* " *jeruſalem, coming down from God out of heaven—He ſhewed* " *me the great city, the holy jeruſalem, coming down from God* " *out of heaven.* Agreeable to this account are many other " places of ſcripture; as 2 *Cor.* 5. 1. The houſe not made " with hands, in which good men ſhall dwell, is, at preſent, in " the *heavens*; but hereafter it ſhall be an houſe *from heaven*, " v. 2, i. e. it ſhall come down from heaven. The hope of " chriſtians is, at preſent, laid up in *heaven*, Col. i. 5. Their " inheritance is, at preſent, reſerved in *heaven*, 1 Pet. i. 4. " They have an enduring ſubſtance now in *heaven*, Heb. x. 34. " Their Treaſure is, at preſent, in *heaven*, Matt. vi. 20. The " place prepared for them is now in *heaven*, Joh. xiv. 2. This " houſe, this hope, this inheritance, this ſubſtance, this treaſure, " this place are in the *new jeruſalem*. And as the *new jeru-* " *ſalem* is in *heaven*, theſe things cannot but be there too. But " *hereafter*, when the *new jeruſalem* ſhall come down *from* " *heaven* upon the *new earth*, then theſe things ſhall come down " in and with it. St. *John* is not peculiar in repreſenting the " place of good men's habitation in the other world as a city. " St. *Paul* has frequently done the ſame; as in *Heb.* xi. 10, and " 16. *Heb.* xiii. 14. St. *Paul* alſo agrees with St. *John* as to " the *name* of this city, the *heavenly jeruſalem*, Heb. xii. 22. " Both St. *John* and St. *Paul* call it a *city*, and *jeruſalem*; and " both ſay, that though it be *now* in heaven, it ſhall *hereafter* " come down from heaven." Vol. ibid. Pag. 194, 195.

ſore travel which God hath given the ſons of men to be exerciſed with. We muſt toil at our ſeveral occupations for the ſupport of our ſelves, and thoſe who have their dependance on us; for that is the appointment of heaven, *in the ſweat of thy face thou ſhalt eat bread, till thou return to the ground.* But, in the *reſurrection*-world, good men ſhall be eternally freed from theſe cares and labors. The conſtitution of things there is ſuch, as that they will no more have occaſion for food, or raiment, or habitations. They ſhall hunger no more, neither thirſt any more; neither ſhall the ſun light on them, or any heat, or cold, or ſtorm; for theſe, and all ſuch occaſions of anxious thoughtfulneſs, and toilſome care, are removed away.

Our bodies, ſince the *lapſe*, and the *curſe* in conſequence of it, are liable to weakneſs and wearineſs, to diſeaſes and pains, to accidents and harms; and, at length, muſt, in one way or another, be deſtroyed by death. But, in the reſurrection world, there is neither ſorrow nor pain: Neither ſhall there be any more death. Our corruption ſhall put on incorruption, our mortal ſhall put on immortality, and death be ſwallowed up of life.

The earth we now live upon is, by the *curſe*, become a place of diſcipline and tryal; giving frequent opportunity for the excitement and exerciſe of patience, ſelf-denial, ſilence and ſubmiſſion to the ſovereign pleaſure of God. But good men, in the reſurrection world, ſhall be no more ſubjected to any tryals of this kind. Their warfare is accompliſhed, their time of diſcipline is over; and they are now in a world which is ſo form'd, as to give no more occaſion for ever for any inconvenience, for any ſuffering, in any kind or degree, to try their faith and patience.

The earth, by the *curſe*, has been furniſhed with materials to produce thoſe events, which are fitted to alarm our fears, and awaken us to call on God; or,

if we are obdurate and incorrigible, to puniſh us with ſudden and awful deſtruction. But good men, in the reſurrection-world, are no more in danger of forgetting God, or neglecting to pay him the homage that is his due. They *ceaſe not day, nor night, aſcribing bleſſing, and glory, and honor, to him that ſitteth on the throne, and to the lamb.* They are therefore placed in a world, where they ſhall no more be *broken with ſtorms*, nor *perſecuted with tempeſts*; where they ſhall no more be *afraid for the terror by day, or the arrow that flieth by night; for the peſtilence that walketh in darkneſs, or deſtruction that waſteth at noon-day.* God's *voice now ſhaketh the earth, and the people tremble*; but they are then in a *kingdom that cannot be moved*; for its founder is the Lord; and he dwells in the midſt of it as its King and God.

In a word, good men, in the reſurrection-world, ſhall neither feel nor fear evil any more. Death ſhall be turned into life, pain into pleaſure; and, inſtead of thoſe calamitous events which now occaſion fear and diſtreſs, they ſhall uninterruptedly rejoice in the tokens of the divine favor; for the lamb, who is in the midſt of the throne, ſhall lead them to fountains of living waters, and eternally wipe away all tears from their eyes.

There are other diſcriptions, in the ſacred writings, of the *reſurrection*-world; ſuch as give us an idea of its fitneſs to make good men *poſitively* and perfectly happy;—But my text conſiders *this world* only in the view I have given of it, as *having no Curſe*; the meaning of which, ſo far as we are capable of taking in a full idea of it, I have endeavoured to explain to you.

And the *reflections*, naturally deduceable from what has been ſaid, are theſe that follow.

1. We may herefrom learn to think juſtly of the heinous guilt of the firſt ſin, the ſin of the firſt parents

of

of men, in eating of the forbidden tree. For it was this that bro't down a *curſe* from God, that changed the earth from the *ſtate* in which it was created, to *that* which has fitted it to be an occaſion of much tryal and ſorrow to the ſons of men ever ſince. Abſtracted from thoſe inconveniencies and ſufferings, which are owing to the perſonal vices of mankind, there are others, and many too, that are unavoidable from the preſent conſtitution of nature. Toil, ſickneſs, and death, in a variety of forms, we are all ſubjected to, be our perſonal character what it will. And theſe evils are a ſtanding demonſtration of the great guilt of the firſt tranſgreſſion; for they took riſe from it, and are the effect of the curſe of God for it. And it might be an inſtance, not only of juſtice, but of wiſdom and goodneſs in God, thus to teſtify againſt this ſin; for the evil effects occaſioned by it may reaſonably be looked upon as ſo many *moral admonitions*, in the government of providence, powerfully fitted to teach mankind the neceſſity of an *obediential regard* to the authority of him, who is our Law-giver, King & Judge.

2. We ſhould learn, from what has been ſaid, *a fear of ſinning after the ſimilitude of* Adam's *tranſgreſſion*, leſt the heavens and earth, being furniſh'd with materials therefor, ſhould conſpire, in one way or another, under the agency of a provoked Deity, to make us know and feel how evil and bitter a thing it is to ſin againſt the Lord. It was principally with a view to ſerve the ends of *moral Government*, that *material nature* was ſo changed by the *curſe*, as to be made capable of bringing on thoſe events, that might warn, diſtreſs, and deſtroy the inhabitants of the world: And to ſerve theſe ends, that is, to reſtrain mankind from wickedneſs, or, when they are grown wicked, to correct them for it, the alwiſe Governor of the univerſe will make uſe of theſe *proviſions in nature* in a way of

judgment. Thus he has done all along from the beginning of the world. Which of thoſe calamitous evils, nature is endow'd with a power, under the divine direction, to bring upon ſinful nations, and provinces, and cities, have not in fact been bro't upon them? How have they, in all ages, and in all places, been ſorely affrightened, diſtreſſed, and, in a leſs or greater degree, deſtroyed, by the ſword, by the peſtilence, by tempeſts, by fires, by inundations, and the like? And what awful deſolations has that terrible evil, in particular, *the earthquake*, made in the earth? It has, at one time and another, in this part of the world or that, fearfully deſtroyed cities, and towns, and villages; ſhaking down their houſes, and burying the inhabitants in their ruins; or opening ſuch wide chaſms in the ground as have ſwallowed them up in one fatal minute? Hundreds and thouſands have, in this way, been ſuddenly and ſurprizingly buried in one common grave, at one and the ſame time! And if the inhabitants of the world, inſtead of learning righteouſneſs by theſe judgments of God, grow forgetful of him, and ſenſeleſs of their obligations to him, taking no care to pay him that fear, and worſhip, and obedience, which are his due, there is no reaſon to think, but he will employ thoſe *natural cauſes* he has arm'd with power for this purpoſe, to chaſtiſe them, and, if they obſtinately perſiſt in their wicked ways, to deſtroy them.

Would we, the inhabitants of this Town, and Land, know our deſerts, and learn what we may expect, if we continue in our ſins, and will not forſake them, let us, in our ſerious contemplations, go to *Cadiz*,* and *Seville*,

* In conſequence of the earthquake at *Cadiz*, there came on an *inundation of the ſea*, which ſwept away, in a few minutes, an awful number of ſouls; and it muſt have overwhelmed the *whole city*, had not the riſing and rolling waves been happily ſtopt, in their progreſs, by the ſtrong and high walls with which the city was encompaſſed.

Seville, [a] and St. *Ubes*, [b] and *Lisbon*, and ſee what God has done to thoſe places, for the wickedneſs of his people. This tremendous dealing of God, eſpecially with the great, rich, and populous city of *Lisbon* [c], may

[a] In *Seville*, beſides the loſs of many lives by the falling of the houſes, either wholly, or in part, other damage was done to the amount of ſome millions of dollars.

[b] It is ſaid, that St. *Ubes* was ſunk down ſo as to be intirely covered with water; the conſequence of which muſt have been the deſtruction of its inhabitants, who are reckoned to be about 3000. Several towns and villages, both in *Portugal* and *Spain*, are likewiſe ſaid to have been ſwallow'd up by opening chaſms in the earth.

[c] This great city was *intirely ruined* in one fatal minute. Tho' it contain'd, at the loweſt computation, *thirty thouſand* houſes, beſides the King's palace, many large churches, and other public buildings, yet they were all, in a manner, thrown down, and hundreds and thouſands of men, women, and children, of all ranks and conditions, buried together in one common grave. And the *treaſure* alſo that was loſt, by this amazing occurrence, is beyond all account; eſpecially as it occaſioned the houſes to take fire, and burn with violence that carried all before it. The *merchants* in *London* have ſuffered greatly by the ſufferings of *Lisbon*; and the ſame may be ſaid of other *merchants* in moſt of the trading cities all over *Europe*: Nay, there are numbers of *merchants* in *Boſton*, and other places in *America*, who are partakers in the *loſs* that has been ſuſtain'd by this awful cataſtrophe. This minds me of thoſe obſervable words in the 18th *Chapter* of the book of the *Revelation*, "And the *merchants* of "the earth ſhall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth "her merchandiſe any more, the merchandiſe of *gold*, and *ſilver*, "and *precious ſtones*, and *wine*, and *oyl*.—— All things which "were dainty and good are departed from her. The *merchants* "of thoſe things which were made rich by her, ſhall ſtand afar "off for fear of her torment, weeping, and wailing, and ſaying, "alas, alas, that GREAT CITY, that was clothed in fine linnen, "and purple, and ſcarlet, and decked with gold, and precious "ſtones, and pearls, for IN ONE HOUR ſo great riches is come "to nought. And every *ſhip-maſter*, and *all the company in* "*ſhips*, and *ſailors*, and *as many as trade by ſea*, ſtood afar off, "and cried, when they SAW THE SMOKE OF HER BURNING, "ſaying,

may be a more *immediate* warning to the *nation* of which it is a part, and to the *nations round about*, calling upon them to give glory to the ſupreme Governor of the world, by repenting of their ſins: But it may reaſonably be looked upon as a *call* to us alſo; and the rather, as we were viſited in the ſame month, by a like *ſhaking of the earth*, and to a more terrible degree than was ever known in the country before. Surely, the voice of providence loudly beſpeaks us, in the language of our Saviour to the men of Jeruſalem, upon occaſion of the deſtruction of a number of them, by the falling of the tower of *Siloam*, *except ye repent, ye ſhall all likewiſe periſh.* What reaſon have we to expect any other? Don't we deſerve a like deſtruction? We are certainly a very ſinful people. Our iniquities are increaſed over our heads, and our treſpaſſes have reached unto the heavens. And how ſoon they may pull down the divine vengeance upon us, we know not. God has other judgments beſides that of an *earthquake.*

"ſaying, What city is like unto this *great city*? And they caſt "duſt on their heads, and cried, weeping, and wailing, and "ſaying, Alas, alas, that *great city*, wherein were *made rich all* "*that had ſhips in the ſea*, by reaſon of her coſtlineſs: For IN "ONE HOUR SHE IS MADE DESOLATE."

I will will not affirm, that the awful deſolation, brought on the city of *Liſbon*, is the judgment *directly intended* in this *prophetick* paſſage of ſcripture; and that it has hereby been fulfilled according to its *real meaning*: But thus much I will venture to ſay, that there is a ſurprizing analogy between what has come, in the governing providence of God, upon this *famous city*, and what is *foretold* in this prophecy; for its deſolation was accompliſh'd IN ONE HOUR; it was follow'd with a BURNING, the SMOKE WHEREOF was SEEN by the *companies* of *eight hundred* ſail of veſſels, then lying in its ſpacious harbour; and its conſequences extend to, and cauſe a *wailing* among, many of the *merchants* all over the trading world, together with *ſhipmaſters*, and *ſailors*, who have loſt their effects, and may no more make themſelves *rich* with the *merchandiſe* of this city, which has been ſo dreadfully laid waſte.

quake. And if he ſhould not deſtroy us in *this way*, he may in ſome other. And how far he may make uſe of our *French* neighbours, and the *Indian-natives* in their intereſt, to impoveriſh, weaken, and gradually depopulate us, is more than we can any of us ſay at preſent. The face of our affairs, in military reſpects, looks dark. What a vaſt ſum of national money has been worſe than thrown away upon the *ſouthern* expedition, as it has turned out a fruitleſs one? Nor is this the worſt of that unhappy enterpriſe. The horrible ſlaughter of *Britiſh* troops, near the *Monongehala*, and the ſhameful *defeat* occaſioned thereby, has expoſed the *ſouthern* colonies to more and greater barbarities, within a few months, than from their firſt ſettlement to this day.— And what have we, in *New-England*, got by our *Crown-point-expedition?* Our troops, it is owned, have gained, under the bleſſing of heaven, a glorious victory over a numerous army of *French* and *Indians*, near *Lake-George*. But then, it muſt be added, this victory was far leſs glorious than it would have been, humanly ſpeaking, if it had been wiſely and reſolutely purſued. Why it was not, is matter of juſt wonder! Eſpecially to thoſe who have heard, that the *private ſoldiers* would gladly have purſued, but were reſtrained. And it muſt be added yet further, there would have been no opportunity for gaining even this leſs glorious victory, had it not been for that over-ruling providence of God, which brings things to paſs beyond the deſign of man. It was not by *our counſel*, but by the enemy's thruſting themſelves in our way, that this battle was fought; and had it not been for their *officiouſneſs* in coming to us, it *now* appears that our army would have been disbanded without doing any thing worth mentioning. Tis certain, notwithſtanding the advantage gained againſt them, our troops were never carried one ſtep further towards *Fort-Frederick*; and tis as certain,

that

that the *true deſign* of the *New-England-Governments*, in raiſing, and ſending, and ſubſiſting ſo great an armament, was thereby *intirely defeated*: And the defeat is followed with a burden of charge very grievous to bear; and the more ſo, as we are in far worſe circumſtances, with reſpect to the taking of this place, than before we were involved in this heavy charge, which now lies upon us as a *dead weight* we groan to be delivered from. What future expeditions may be projected, or how they will be managed, muſt be left to time to diſcover. But it is, at preſent, manifeſt, that we are under the ſcourge of God, and loudly called upon to conſider our ways, and repent, and reform: And till we are bro't to this, we lie continually expoſed, not only to this rod of his anger, but to all the judgments this Earth is capable of being uſed as the *ſecondary cauſe*, under God, of bringing upon us. The plain truth is, there is no ſafety, no ſecurity for us, whether as particular perſons, or a people, on this earth, which, by the *curſe*, is ſtored, in all places, with materials for correction, or deſtruction, as God pleaſes; but by making him our friend thro' Jeſus Chriſt; which can't be done but by putting away our iniquities, or in other words, by getting that *moral change* introduced in us, which will render us *meet objects* of the divine favor: And we ſhould make haſte, and delay not, in ſo intereſting and important a matter.

3. What has been diſcourſed opens to our view the *folly* of thoſe who *depend on this world for happineſs*. Thus it is with a great many. This world is the chief object of their deſire, and purſuit. It engroſſes their affections, and engages all their endeavours. They look for happineſs from earthly good things; imagining they might ſit down contented and ſatisfied, could they once come to the obtainment of them. But they are herein chargeable with great folly. For the

world

world we live in is not, in its preſent ſtate, fitted to be a place of happineſs; and this we know, or eaſily may know, from obſervation and experience in thouſands of inſtances. Who indeed, among the multitudes, that have ſearched for happineſs among the things under the ſun, have ever found it? Not a ſingle man! No one, perhaps, that ever lived was better qualified, or ſituated, for ſuch a ſearch than *Solomon*, the ſon of David, and King over Iſrael; and yet, after all his ſearches and reſearches, and this among all the objects of earthly pleaſure and delight, that is his concluſion, *Behold, all is vanity, and vexation of ſpirit, and there is no profit under the ſun*, Eccleſ. 2. 11. And we may depend, tis a juſt determination upon the caſe. Moſt men indeed are diſpos'd to imagine otherwiſe. Inſtead of truſting to *Solomon*'s experience, they are for making tryal themſelves; hoping that they ſhall meet with happineſs, tho' he fail'd in the attempt. And how often, from this vain expectation, have the ſame experiments been repeated over and over again, in proportion to men's advantages and opportunities? And what has been the effect? They have always ended in emptineſs and diſappointment. And how could it poſſibly have been otherwiſe, when the earth they live upon is under *a Curſe* from heaven, which has fitted it to be an occaſion of *toil* and *ſorrow*, in numberleſs caſes? The ſhort of the matter is, God never intended that this world, ſince the lapſe, ſhould be capable of yielding pleaſure without pain, good without the mixture of evil. The preſent conſtitution of nature is incompatible with unmingled happineſs; and if any look for the enjoyment of ſuch happineſs, they do but deceive themſelves: they imagine a vain thing; and will ſurely meet with diſappointment. The preſent heaven & earth muſt paſs away, and a new heaven and earth riſe up in their room, before any ſon or daugh-

ter of *Adam* can poſſeſs life without paſſing through a multiplied variety of inconveniencies, diſappointments, vexations, and ſorrows, all trying to their patience, and not to be endured without greatly alloying their comforts in other reſpects.

And tis beſt it ſhould be thus. Inſtead of complaining againſt God for mixing ſo many grievances with every ſtate of life we can be in, we have reaſon rather to thank him for his *wiſe goodneſs*. For hereby the temptations that may ariſe from worldly good things are leſſened in their ſtrength, and our danger of being ruined by being too much attached to them, in the ſame proportion, prevented. We are, in this preſent ſtate, under diſcipline, in a ſchool, as it were, to be trained up for another and better world: And it is for our real benefit, that this earth, and the things of it, are no more tempting to us. We ſhould ſay within ourſelves, were that the caſe, it is good to be always here; and the hazard would be awfully great, leſt our ruin would thereby be procured.

4. We are directed, from what has been ſaid, where to look for happineſs, if we would not be diſappointed, namely, in the *reſurrection-world*; in which there are none of thoſe occaſions of fear and diſtreſs, which now diſturb our grief, and try our patience. Bleſſed be God, ſuch a world as this is opened to our view in the Goſpel, thro' Jeſus Chriſt; a world of freedom from evil and ſorrow; a world in which there is neither ſin, nor pain, nor death; a world in which there ſhall be no more any ſighing or tears, but unmixed joys ever flowing from the right hand of God. Let us then give up all hope of happineſs from this earth, or any thing in it; extending our views beyond the grave to the *reſurrection-world*, as the only one that is ſuted to yield us intire ſatisfaction and delight. This is what we muſt come to firſt or laſt, if we would not be

fruſtrated

fruſtrated in our expectations. For ſolid and compleat happineſs is to be had no where elſe. We may imagine otherwiſe, and ſeek for it in this or the other earthly enjoyment; but we ſhall certainly meet with diſappointment. They will all ſay, upon tryal, it is not in us: Neither is it to be found any where but in that world, concerning which my text ſays, *there is no Curſe there.*

What therefore remains, as the concluſion of all, but that we ſo live in this *preſent ſtate*, as that we may not fail of being happy in that which is to come. In order whereto, we muſt moderate our regard to earthly things, and keep our deſires, hopes, and purſuits, with reference to them, under the reſtraints of reaſon and religion. If we ſeek the Things that are on the earth, it muſt be in due ſubordination to the greater Things that are above. The *better country*, even the *heavenly*, ſhould be principally in our eye; and the good things of it ſhould have the firſt place in our hearts. We ſhould make them the chief objects of our hopes and purſuits. And as there is no way in which we can be ſecure of an intereſt in them, but by doing the will of God, his will which requires faith in Jeſus Chriſt; his will which requires our ſanctification in ſpirit, ſoul, and body; his will which requires our active obedience to the precepts of his word, and a patient ſubmiſſion to the diſpoſals of his hand: I ſay, as the only way to obtain the bleſſedneſs of the *reſurrection*-world is by thus doing the will of God, this muſt be the great buſineſs of our lives. And if we frame our hearts, and order our converſation, by this rule of duty, we ſhall not fail of compleat ſatisfaction, perfect happineſs, in the end.

We may, while in this world, have our *evil things*. They are, indeed, unavoidable attendants on us here. There is no living in a world, conſtituted as this is, without

without ſufferings of one kind or another, in a leſs or greater degree. The greateſt holineſs we can attain to won't ſecure us from them: Nay, as we live in a world that *lies in wickedneſs*, we may be *ſufferers*, even, by thoſe tremendous judgments of God, that are ſent upon the earth, in teſtimony of his juſt diſpleaſure againſt the ſins that are committed in it. But we have no reaſon for diſquietude, be the evils, ordinary or extraordinary, what they will, we are called to ſuffer. For our *hope* is not here, but *within the vail, whither the fore-runner is for us entered, even Jeſus our high-prieſt*; which *hope* ſhould be as *the anchor of our ſouls*, to keep us ſteady amidſt all the ſtorms of fear and trouble we may be expoſed to in this tempeſtuous world. The utmoſt that preſent evils can do, be the terror they are accompanied with what it will, is to kill our bodies, and ſend our ſouls into another ſtate. And why ſhould we be anxiouſly concerned about this? Is not this *other ſtate* the great object of our faith, and hope, and deſire? Can we be happy till we arrive at the *Jeruſalem that is above*, this *city that has foundations, whoſe builder and maker is God?* 7 AP 64

Let us, my brethren, make religion the *grand care* of our lives, and we need not diſtreſs ourſelves about any of the events of time; for they ſhall all work together for our good; and tho' not joyous for the preſent, but grievous, they ſhall in the end, yield unto us the peaceable fruits of righteouſneſs. For it is a Goſpel ſaying, and a faithful one, *if we ſuffer with Chriſt here, we ſhall reign with him hereafter*. The tryal of our faith and patience, being like that of gold which is tried in the fire, ſhall be found to praiſe, and honor, and glory, at the appearing of Jeſus Chriſt; for we ſhall then receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promiſed to them that love him: And this crown will be bright & weighty, in proportion to the ſorrows and ſufferings we have been called to, and have born with humility, meekneſs, ſilence, and ſubmiſſion to the alwiſe righteous Governor of the univerſe.

Let us comfort ourſelves, and one another, with theſe bleſſed hopes, that are opened to our view in the revelations of God by Jeſus Chriſt, to whom be glory in the Church, throughout all ages.

A M E N.